

AFRICAN AUTHORS

A COMPANION TO BLACK AFRICAN WRITING
Volume I: 1300-1973

By

DONALD E. HERDECK

Contributors

Abiola Irele, Lilyan Kesteloot, Gideon Mangoela

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AFRICAN AUTHORS
A COMPANION TO BLACK AFRICAN WRITING
Volume I: 1300-1973

This volume represents the first of a series of biennial reference companions to Black African writing. Future volumes will update and perfect the entries of previous years, add more authors, and include new critical essays by recognized authorities on a variety of aspects of African literature. About every six years all previous volumes will be corrected, revised, cumulated, and published in a single volume.

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INTRODUCTION

This volume contains biographical information on 594 authors and bibliographical information on some 2,000 works in a wide variety of genres. The authors are primarily from sub-Saharan Africa, or what is generally now called Black Africa, but Malagasy and Mauritius are also included because of the very clear cross-fertilization between the mainland and island cultures and their similar colonial experience. The emphasis in genres is on standard Western categories, the novel, poem, play, and short story, but other types of literature more appropriate to African folk-oral traditions are also dealt with, including the tale, proverb, and legend. Biographic, autobiographic, critical and journalistic works and their authors are also treated when the work is historically early, or otherwise of interest in the context of the country or language literature concerned.

A total of 37 African vernacular languages, including Arabic and Amharic, are represented by 233 authors and some 500 published volumes or major titles as well as hundreds of poems, plays, stories, and other minor works, both published and unpublished. The major Western European languages, English, French, Portuguese, and Latin, as well as Afrikaans, are represented by 400 authors. (Figures add to more than the total of 594 authors dealt with because some authors work, or worked, in two or more languages.)

Sixteen appendices, including four critical essays and three bibliographies, and two maps are provided to give the reader basic tools for surveying and studying the literature of Africa from a variety of analytic and descriptive perspectives.

Purposes of the Work

With the post-World War II explosion of creative works by African writers, the need for a biobibliographical companion to African writing, includ-

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